

Editorial

The Incoming Tide

As the wall of water broke through the levees down in New Orleans, drowning that city and thousands of our fellow citizens, and as Katrina made its murderous way through the rest of the Gulf Coast region, a political and cultural sea change began to take shape in this nation, one that might prevent a recurrence of a tragedy made dramatically worse by the Bush Administration's gross incompetence and malfeasance. This cultural paradigm-shift may take some time, but that it is under way is the defining reality of the current period.

As Democrat Lyndon LaRouche pointed out, what demolished the Gulf Coast and killed our citizens, was not an act of nature but the product of man's decisions—the decision of the Bush Administration not to act when warned, as the timelines printed in this issue show. But there was a deeper problem that governed those decisions, and previous policy that took down emergency preparedness capabilities and refused to invest in basic infrastructure, even when existing infrastructure was clearly inadequate or in need of replacement.

This nation was created by individuals who saw that government must have a sacred bond with its citizens to act to protect them, to serve the General Welfare of each and all, as the Preamble to our Constitution specifies, and to act on that principle in the interests of the living, and also those who will come after them—and to honor and give meaning to the lives of all those who came before, and on whose shoulders we stand. From this perspective, government is obligated to act in crisis with a sense of urgency, and with all resources at its disposal, to protect all in harm's way; especially those who have no voice or protection but the Federal government.

It was this principle of the General Welfare that Franklin Roosevelt reasserted in leading us to victory over depression and fascism. It was his vision of service to future generations that led to vast programs of infrastructure-building; the cornerstone of New Deal policy that helped guide a prudent, future-oriented investment policy.

In the 60 years since FDR's death, there has been an assault on this principle of the General Welfare. The

New Deal programs of social legislation and economic regulation have been dismantled; the commitment to basic infrastructure is no longer there. All of this has been wrapped up in a cultural attack on the idea of "Big Government," which says that government should get out of the way of people and the "private sector," that it should spend less, tax less, and leave things to the "free market." If people are poor, well, that's their problem; make them work at slave wages, or better yet, let them die off, preferably quietly.

Too many Americans bought into this, on the promise that they might reap some rewards from the speculative orgies unleashed. The Bush Administration came into office committed to the "Final Solution" for the General Welfare problem; they were ready to wipe away every last trace of the FDR program, including even Social Security, preaching radical "free market" lunacies as their justification, no matter how many people might die in this act of political cleansing. It was this commitment that guided their destruction of the FEMA apparatus and its immersion in the incompetent Homeland Security machine; this commitment also caused them to slash funding for public infrastructure that might have saved thousands of lives, plans that were in place and ready to be implemented towards the end of the Clinton Administration.

As the bodies float to the surface in New Orleans, America now sees the result of straying from the FDR concept of government and America's Constitutional commitment to the General Welfare. Clearly, only the Federal government could have met this crisis effectively—but only a Federal government that stood, as FDR did, for the General Welfare.

It is the shock of Katrina that is provoking this widespread realization now, as it is reflected in anger at the Bush regime. That is why LaRouche has said that we are in the middle of a cultural paradigm-shift. The various actions in Congress, both by Democrats and Republicans, are an "incoming tide" that is sweeping people into action; it is a tide that cannot be resisted, except with grave political and physical consequences, for future generations.